

I commend the gentlelady from Colorado for her amendment. I urge my colleagues to support her amendment by decreasing by one half of 1 percent the increase in this appropriations bill.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Chairman, as I think about this amendment again, I have heard from the distinguished chairman, and I do applaud his work and the work of the ranking member on this appropriations bill, but I heard, I believe it was Representative Contee talk about a meat-ax approach to reducing spending.

I would just like to say again that this .5 percent is just a gentle shave. We need to look at the trajectory when we look at appropriations bills and see where they are going. We need to ask the American family, are you guaranteed a 4.5 percent increase in your income every year?

I think we need to think of that American family, particularly moms and dads with children that are trying to figure out how long they are going to have to work in the year before they reach tax freedom day. How many days do they have to work before they have earned enough money to pay the government to spend like this with increases every year?

I am hoping we can look out for the American taxpayer, we can look out for hard-working Americans and say we are going to exercise fiscal responsibility, and we are going to start out with a very small step, reducing spending in this Interior appropriations bill by .5 percent.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in very strong opposition to the amendment. I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. PETERSON OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Is the gentleman from Pennsylvania the designee for Mr. DOOLITTLE?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Yes.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new title:

TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 601. The amounts otherwise provided in this Act are revised by reducing the amounts under the following headings "BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT—MANAGEMENT OF LANDS AND RESOURCES" by \$34,341,000, "BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT—LAND ACQUISITION" by \$17,015,000, "UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—LAND ACQUISITION" by \$25,035,000, "UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUNDS" by \$4,655,000, "UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS" by \$17,508,000, "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE—LAND ACQUISITION" by \$76,873,000, "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE—CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE" by \$22,721,000, "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY—ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS AND MANAGEMENT" by \$37,660,000, "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE—OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL" by \$6,328,000, "FOREST SERVICE—FOREST AND RANGELAND RESEARCH" by \$7,500,000, "FOREST SERVICE—STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY" by \$13,476,000, "FOREST SERVICE—NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM" by \$53,773,000, "FOREST SERVICE—CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE" by \$25,000,000, "FOREST SERVICE—LAND ACQUISITION" by \$28,782,000, "NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS—GRANTS AND ADMINISTRATION" by \$35,438,000, and "NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES—GRANTS AND ADMINISTRATION" by \$18,895,000, and \$425,000,000 shall be available for payments during fiscal year 2008 under sections 102 and 103 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393; 16 U.S.C. 500 note), as reauthorized by section 2201 of Public Law 110-28.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order on this amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, June 26, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I rise to support the Secure Rural Schools Act. My district in Pennsylvania is affected by this and many districts in the west are affected by this Act.

Over the years, timber harvesting and other mineral resources harvesting provided a huge resource for local governments, and, specifically, schools.

When those who chose not to continue the wise management of our forest by allowing the mature trees to be harvested, America's most renewable resource, we had school districts and governments in tremendous financial crisis. Several years ago, Congress had the wisdom to pass the Secure Rural Schools Act that helped stabilize the ability to educate our young people and give them the chances of an adequate, good education, because these rural communities did not have the infrastructure, because most of the property and land and resources was owned by the Federal Government. This Act has helped in immense ways, and this chance, this amendment, will continue that funding.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, the most critical crisis in rural America, where there are large tracts of public forest land, is to deal with this issue of funding for the Secure Rural Schools.

The funding did finally come this year, but it came too late, at least for my district, and I think for many. Our State law requires that if you are going to give layoff notices to teachers, they have to go out in the month of March. All the layoff notices already went out. Most of the teachers already left the schools to find other employment. The funding for this finally came through in late May, as I recall, in the supplemental, but by that time the damage had been done.

We have to find a solution. This amendment that Mr. PETERSON and I are offering is an approach. I know there is a point of order that has been reserved, but we have to have timely funding for our rural schools. If we put it in this bill, it doesn't actually increase the deficit as it would if it went as a new mandatory program, or if it went in the supplemental. By the way, this is important enough, I would certainly support either of those other approaches.

But the fact of the matter is, we need to assure timely funding so that we don't have the situation where the funding comes in, but it comes in too late in order to really matter for the schools and the students.

Plumas County, for example, one county in my district, issued layoff notices to 55 personnel earlier this year, and most of them are gone, even though the funding ultimately came through. So this is timely funding. It does it in a way that's least detrimental to the whole budget picture. I have worked, I have tried to work on every possible solution that I could think of. This is really a critical situation for all of rural America, where there are tracts of public forest land, and I really strongly hope that the Members will support us on this, help us to get a resolution to this crisis so that we can meet the needs of the people that we represent.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, with deep regret, I insist on my point of order.

I make a point of order against the amendment because it provides an appropriation for an unauthorized program, and, therefore, violates clause 2 of rule XXI. Clause 2 of rule XXI states in pertinent part, "An appropriation may not be in order as an amendment for an expenditure not previously authorized by law."

The amendment proposes to appropriate funds for the rural school program that has not been reauthorized. The amendment, therefore, violates clause 2 of rule XXI, and I am sorry that I have to raise a point of order, but the payments for the Secure Rural Schools Act of 2000 are not authorized.